

Organ harvesting in China

Notes for **David Matas**, International Human Rights Lawyer, Winnipeg, Canada
At a hearing of the US House of Representatives Committee on International Relations,
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations
Room 2172 of the Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-0128

29 September 2006

Chairman Rohrabacher and honorable members of the committee,

Is China harvesting organs of Falun Gong practitioners, killing them in the process? A Japanese television news agency reporter and the ex-wife of a surgeon in March made claims this was happening at Liaoning Hospital in Sujiatun, China. Are those claims true?

The Coalition to Investigate the Persecution of the Falun Gong in China, an organization headquartered in Washington D.C., in May asked former Canadian Secretary of State for Asia and the Pacific David Kilgour and me to investigate these claims. We released a report in July which came to the conclusion, to our regret and horror, that the claims were indeed true.

The repressive and secretive nature of Chinese governance made it difficult for us to assess the claims. We were not allowed entry to China, though we tried. Organ harvesting is not done in public. If the claims are true, the participants are either victims who are killed and their bodies cremated or perpetrators who are guilty of crimes against humanity and unlikely to confess.

We examined every avenue of proof and disproof available to us, eighteen in all. They were:

- 1) The Communist Party of China, for no apparent reason other than totalitarian paranoia, sees Falun Gong as an ideological threat to its existence. Yet, objectively, Falun Gong is just a set of exercises with a spiritual component.
- 2) The threat the Communist Party perceives from the Falun Gong community has led to a policy of persecution. Persecution of the Falun Gong in China is officially decided and decreed.
- 3) Falun Gong practitioners are victims of extreme vilification. The official Chinese position on Falun Gong is that it is "an evil cult".
- 4) Falun Gong practitioners have been arrested in huge numbers. They are detained without trial or charge until they renounce Falun Gong beliefs.
- 5) Falun Gong practitioners are victims of systematic torture and ill treatment. While the claims of organ harvesting of Falun Gong practitioners has been met with doubt, there is no doubt about this torture.

6) Many Falun Gong practitioners have formally disappeared; they are the subject of formal disappearance complaints by family members. Many more practitioners, in attempt to protect their families and communities, have not identified themselves once arrested. These unidentified are a particularly vulnerable population.

7) Traditional sources of transplants - executed prisoners, donors, the brain dead - come nowhere near to explaining the total number of transplants in China. The only other identified source which can explain the skyrocketing transplant numbers is Falun Gong practitioners.

8) Falun Gong practitioners in prison are systematically blood tested and physically examined. Yet, because they are also systematically tortured, this testing can not be motivated by concerns over their health.

9) In a few cases, between death and cremation, family members of Falun Gong practitioners were able to see the mutilated corpses of their loved ones. Organs had been removed.

10) We interviewed the ex-wife of the surgeon from Sujiatun. Her testimony was credible to us. In order to be cautious, we relied on this testimony only when it was independently corroborated.

11) We had callers phoning hospitals throughout China posing as family members of persons who needed organ transplants. In a wide variety of locations, those who were called asserted that Falun Gong practitioners (reputedly healthy because of their exercise regime) were the source of the organs. We have recordings and telephone bills for these calls.

12) Waiting times for organ transplants in China are incredibly short, a matter of days. Everywhere else in the world, waiting times are measured in years.

13) Chinese hospital web sites host incriminating information advertising organs of all sorts on short notice.

14) A Falun Gong practitioner who had been in prison in China told us that her Chinese jailers lost interest in her once they found out that her organs had been damaged.

15) China is a systematic human rights violator. The overall pattern of violations makes it harder to dismiss any one claimed violation.

16) There is huge money to be made in China from transplants. Prices charged to foreigners, also available on a web site, range from \$30,000.00 US for corneas to \$180,000.00 US for a liver kidney combination.

17) Corruption in China is a major problem. The huge money to be made from transplants, the lack of state controls over corruption and the marginalization of the Falun Gong are a deadly trio.

18) Until July 1 of this year, there was no law in China preventing the selling of organs and no

law requiring consent for organ harvesting. China has had a poor history of implementing its laws which are designed to ensure respect for human rights.

It is easy to take each element in isolation, and say that this element or that does not prove the claim. But it is their combination which led us to the chilling conclusion to which we came.

We are reinforced in our conclusions by the feeble response of the Government of China. Despite all their resources and inside knowledge, they have not provided any information to counter our report. Instead, they have attacked us personally and, more worrisome, attacked the Falun Gong with the very sort of verbal abuse which we have identified as one of the reasons we believe these atrocities are occurring.

Our report has seventeen different recommendations. Virtually every precaution one can imagine to prevent the harvesting of organs of Falun Gong practitioners in China is not there. All these precautions should be put in place.

But there is one basic recommendation we make which must be implemented immediately. Organ harvesting of Falun Gong practitioners in China must stop.

The full report is available at:

<http://organharvestinvestigation.net>,

<http://investigation.go.saveinter.net/>